

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**EA Number:** DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2010-0044

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Rincon Tank Wildlife Apron Catchment

**Location of Proposed Action:** T.23N., R.11W., sec.16, NENE ¼, Cherokee Point Topo, within the Cottonwood Mountains, 6.5 miles southeast of Cherokee Point and 10 miles SE of Truxton, in Mohave County, Arizona. GPS location: NADS 83 zone 12, 0278392/3918184 (Fig. 1).

**Applicant:** Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD)

### CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN:

This proposed action is in conformance with the Kingman Resource Management Plan approved March 1995. RMP Decision number and narrative:

- WL-01 Continue implementation and revision of Habitat Management Plans in coordination and cooperation with the state wildlife agency and interested publics. (RMP, pg. 79).
- WL-55 Protect the important, crucial use, conflict or habitat areas for the threatened, endangered, state-listed or sensitive species (Kingman Resource Management Plan, page 584)
- TE03 BLM will manage for conservation of candidate and BLM-sensitive species (and State Listed species). BLM will ensure that actions authorized will not contribute to the need to list any of these species as threatened or endangered”.
- VR01 Manage visual resources according to the VRM Classes as shown on Map 19 on Page 81 of the RMP.

### PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:

The purpose and need of the proposed action is to provide reliable, permanent water for wildlife within an area that has no water.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

AGFD proposes to construct a metal apron catchment, a fence immediately adjacent to the apron, a ground-level walk-in drinker, two storages buried underneath the catchment, and a pipe-rail fence surrounding the entire facility (Figures 2 and 3). A backhoe would be used for excavation and trucks would haul materials to the site. Total area of disturbance would be ½ acre of which 2,300 square-feet would be cleared of vegetation. Any cacti, nolina, agave, or yucca, plants protected by the Arizona Native Plant Law (Arizona Revised Statutes §§ 3-901-3-934) would be transplanted within the immediate vicinity. Vehicle access to the site for relocation of the new catchment would be from an existing road. The construction timeframe is October 2011 – April 2012 and it would take approximately 8 days to complete the project. Four construction workers would camp near the project site in a previously disturbed area. When the project is completed the construction crew would lightly rake out tire tracks from the backhoe and trucks. The livestock grazing permittee would be notified when project construction is to begin.

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**Figure 2. Proposed catchment location.**



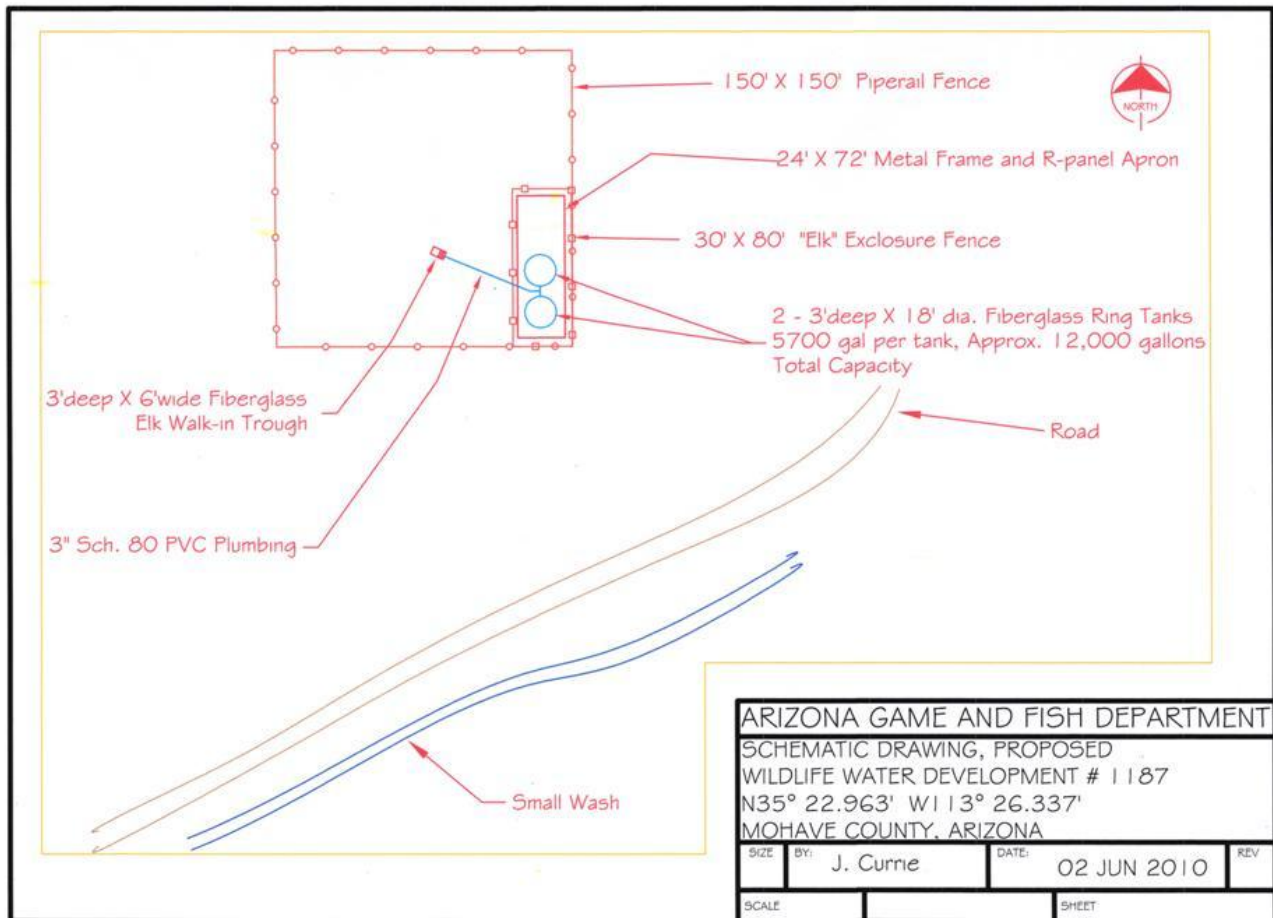
Any cultural (historic/prehistoric site or object) and/or paleontological resource (fossil remains of plants or animals) discovered during construction shall immediately be reported to the Field Manager or his designee. All operations in the immediate area of the discovery shall be suspended until written authorization to proceed is issued. An evaluation of the discovery shall be made by a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientifically important paleontological values.

Project Component Descriptions:

- apron: 24' X 72' corrugated steel (R-panel) would be set just above grade, panels would be "juniper green" which is a dark green color. The apron would be set on a metal frame and sit just above grade lying almost flat on the ground.
- storages: Two 5,700 gallon fiberglass ring tanks would be partially buried and located underneath the apron. The tanks would be 18' each in diameter.
- trough: The walk-in, fiberglass trough would be buried to grade, or slightly above and be approximately 4' wide X 10' long X 3' deep. The trough would have mortar and concrete steps and an escape ramp installed after setting to safely accommodate all wildlife.
- pipeline: For water delivery, 20-60 feet of pipeline would be installed underground between the storages and the trough.
- fence around apron: 8' tall x 30' wide x 80' long field fencing, "Elk" exclusionary fence would be placed immediately around the apron (to prevent elk from walking on the apron).
- facility fence: 150' X 150' (approximate size) pipe-rail (self-rusting) perimeter fence would be installed to exclude livestock.
- access road: A backhoe would be used within the *existing* road footprint to smooth out eroded areas of

the road.

**Figure 3. Schematic drawing of the proposed wildlife water development.**



## DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

No wildlife watering facility would be constructed within the project area.

## AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The affected environment was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the KFO Project Scoping Form found in the Administrative Record for this proposal. This section describes the existing conditions of the environment and expected impacts. The table below summarizes the resources reviewed for this project. Resources not present within the project study area, as well as those present and not affected, are not discussed. Resources which could be affected by the proposed action or alternatives are discussed below.

Project Resource Review			
Resources Considered	Not Present	Present and Not Affected	Present and/or Potentially Affected
Air Quality*		x	
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*	x		
Cultural and Historic*	x		
Environmental Justice* / Socioeconomics		x	
Floodplains*	x		
Grazing			x
Hazardous or Solid Waste*	x		
Invasive and Non-native Species*	x		
Land Use	x		
Migratory Birds*			x
Native American Religious Concerns*	x		
Prime and Unique Farmland*	x		
Threatened and Endangered Species*		x	
Vegetation			x
Visual Resources			x
Water Quality*	x		
Wetland or Riparian Zones*	x		
Wild and Scenic Rivers*	x		
Wilderness*	x		
Wildlife			x
Recreation			x
* Consideration Required By Law or Executive Order			

Cultural Resources: There would be no affect to cultural resources. A 100 percent walking clearance was conducted of the project area and no evidence of artifacts were found (KFO project file).

Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E): An AGFD Heritage Data Base Management System (HDMS) query search found one T&E species that could potentially occur within the project area. There would be “No Affect” to any T&E species or its habitat within the project or action areas. There is no habitat for any federally listed species within the project area with the exception of the California condor.

California condor: The project area is located within the “10 J” area which is the designated non-essential experimental population area of the California condor. The nonessential experimental population status applies to condors only when they are within the experimental population area. Outside of this area condors are considered endangered. There would be no affect to the California

condors as they have not been documented in the project area and no nest, roost or perching habitat is known in this area.

## **Proposed Action**

Vegetation: The project area is located within the Colorado Plateau Eco Region in the short-grass prairie plant community type. These grasslands are dominated by perennial grasses with the landscape dotted with juniper and a few pinyon trees. Plants occurring within the project area are blue and black grama, big galleta, needle-and-thread grass, pinyon, juniper, mariposa lily, and snakeweed (Fig. 2). Construction of the project would result in the permanent loss of 2,300 square feet (1/10<sup>th</sup> of an acre) of short-grass prairie. The catchment would be located within an open area and no trees would be removed. Temporary disturbance caused by construction vehicles parking and driving could potentially occur on another 20,000 square feet (1/2 acres) around the apron. This area would not be cleared and it is expected that crushed plants would re-sprout and the area would recover to its existing condition within a few years or less.

Socioeconomics: The project area is located within the Crozier Canyon livestock grazing allotment. One-half acre of grazing land would be excluded from livestock grazing if the catchment is constructed. This would not change the permitted livestock numbers. The grazing permittee was informed of the proposed action and expressed no concerns. The permittee would be notified once a date has been set for the project construction.

Recreation: The project area is within AGFD Management Unit 18A. The area is used by people traveling trails on ATVS and less so by the hiking public. Hunting of big game is popular in this game unit. Mule deer, elk and pronghorn are sought after by hunters. This wildlife water would increase opportunities for recreationists to observe wildlife and to hunt big game. There would be noise at the construction site and construction workers (about 4 people) would be at the location for approximately 8 days during construction.

Visual Resources: The project area is located in a Class IV Visual Resource area (Kingman Resource Management Plan 1996). This is a remote area that is seldom seen by visitors. The catchment would be visible if viewed from the limestone cliffs located above the site (Fig. 2) however there is no road to the top of these cliffs. It would be visible from the jeep trail below but not visible much past the trail due to the catchment's low stature on the landscape and to the intervening trees (Fig. 4). Location of the catchment and drinker at the ground surface, burying the pipelines and storages, and painting the apron surface "juniper green" would help to mitigate the visual contrast created by the apron.



**Fig. 4. View from proposed catchment to jeep trail.**



**Migratory Birds:** The short-grass prairie plant community provides habitat for a variety of birds including the poor-will, zone-tailed hawk, loggerhead shrike, black-throated sparrow and house sparrow. The construction of the watering facility would remove 2,300 square feet of foraging and potential nesting habitat of migratory birds. No trees would be removed however shrubs where smaller birds would nest would be removed. There would be no impacts to individual birds, active nests, or nestlings as the catchment would be constructed outside of the nesting season. The facility would provide migratory birds with an area they can use as a stop-over for resting, watering, and foraging during migration.

**Wildlife:** The project area is home to a variety of wildlife species that inhabit short-grass prairie grasslands. These include pronghorn, elk, mule deer, bobcat, grey fox, mountain lion, pinyon mice, white-throated woodrat, red-spotted toad, desert spiny lizard, and the diamondback rattlesnake. This catchment would provide a permanent and reliable water for all wildlife. The closest permanent water source is approximately 3 miles away. Mule deer, elk, and pronghorn would likely use this catchment as they are dependent upon water especially during lactation. Water would be available to them in an area that is currently free from livestock forage competition. Water would also be more available to other native mammals, birds, herpetofauna, and invertebrates.

### **No Action Alternative**

No site disturbance would occur and therefore no vegetation would be removed or disturbed. Visual resource would not be affected as there would be no new water facility to be seen. Opportunities for recreationist to view or hunt wildlife would not be enhanced. Wildlife would continue to travel and focus foraging around the livestock water that is located three miles away.

### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Vegetation removal in the form of juniper cutting has occurred on 4,314 acres just south of the project and west to the Hodges Tank area. In 2011 woodcutting is proposed on approximately 1,200 acres in an area to the north and west of the project area. Woodcutting projects resulted in the loss of adult trees but all other plants such as young tree, grasses, forbs, and shrubs were left intact. The Wright Creek Fence (7 miles X

10' wide= 8 acres) was constructed in 2009 bordering Wright Creek. The fence line was hand cleared to facilitate installation. It is expected that the fenceline will re-vegetate to its original plant cover within five years. The plants will re-sprout and some reseed during this recovery time. Two wells and attendant storages, troughs and pipelines were installed to water livestock on the Crozier Canyon allotment in 2009. Total number of acres where vegetation is permanently removed as a result of these two watering facilities is approximately 10 acres. The pipeline installation affected 5 acres. It is expected that the pipeline are will naturally re-vegetate to its original plant cover in 15-20 years.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS:**

No mitigation measures identified as all measures to alleviate environmental impacts have been incorporated into the Proposed Action. One-tenth of an acre of short-grass prairie would be permanently removed with the construction of the catchment.

#### **PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

Len Marceau – BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Bruce Asbjorn – BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Tim Watkins – BLM Archaeologist  
John Rose – BLM Archaeologist  
Mike Blanton – BLM Range Specialist  
Joe Currie – AGFD Development Specialist  
Trevor Buhr – AGFD Habitat Specialist  
Dee Gebhardt – AGFD Wildlife Manager  
Gary Overson – Grazing Permittee

Preparer(s): Rebecca Peck, Wildlife Biologist  
Environmental Coordinator: David Brock



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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT: I have reviewed Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2010-0044 for the construction of the Rincon Tank Wildlife Apron Catchment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required.

Authorized Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ruben Sanchez, Field Office Manager  
Kingman Field Office, Kingman Arizona

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#### DECISION RECORD:

I have determined that the proposed construction of the Rincon Tank Wildlife Apron Catchment is in conformance with the approved land use plan. It is my decision to implement the project as described in the Proposed Action of Environmental Assessment Number DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2010-0044.

Authorized Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ruben Sanchez, Field Office Manager  
Kingman Field Office, Kingman Arizona

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